

Advice about Scarlet Fever.

ISSUED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH OF MAINE.

Scarlet fever, which is sometimes called scarlet rash or canker rash, is one of the dangerous contagious diseases. It is spread in several ways; (1) Directly from the sick person. (2) By things which have been infected by the sick one. (3) By eating or drinking something which has been infected by being handled or by having been near persons who have scarlet fever. (4) By some person who has been with the sick one.

Signs.

Fever, vomiting, sore throat; a bright red rash over the skin coming out in from 12 to 24 hours after the sickness begins; some weeks later the skin peels off in flakes or scales. In some mild cases there is only a slight sore throat with a rash which may not be noticed and the peeling of the skin is not very noticeable.

Dangers.

Many children die within a few days or a few weeks. Others die later of inflammation of the kidneys with dropsy or convulsions or from other diseases due to scarlet fever. Others are left weak and sickly for a long while or always, and often with running ears and deafness. Keep the disease away from your children if you possibly can. It is too dangerous for your little ones. If you can protect them until they are twelve years old or more, they will then not catch the disease so easily. Many persons have never had scarlet fever because they were kept away from it while they were small.

How to Protect Your Children.

Keep your children away from persons and places where scarlet fever is, and keep away yourself. Do not let anybody come into your home who has scarlet fever or who has been where it is until the board of health says they are all right. Look out for things which have come from homes where there has been scarlet fever. They may be infectious. Keep such things away from your children.

When scarlet fever is around, keep your children out of street cars, away from theatres or other places where children assemble; and be particularly careful to keep them away from children who are ailing or who have sore throats or a rash of any kind.

If Scarlet Fever Gets Into Your Home, What?

If one child in your family has scarlet fever, do everything you can to keep it away from the others. Put the sick child into a room by himself and have some good person there to take care of him. Keep the other children away. Do it quickly, just as soon as the child has a sore throat. If scarlet fever has been around, do not wait for the high fever and the rash, it is catching before that. If scarlet fever is not coming on, it may be that other dangerous disease, diphtheria.

Then send for the doctor early. He will tell you what to do to save the other children from the disease.

What Next?

Your second thought should be not to endanger other people's children. Be careful not to let anybody from your house carry the infection to other houses, or to school, or to church, or to other public places. The law provides a severe penalty for carelessness of that kind, but you want to do the right thing anyway, and to be careful to save your neighbor's child from the danger, just as you should demand that they do nothing to endanger your child.

What Then?

The next thing to do is promptly to notify the local board of health or have the doctor do it.

Rules for the 'Sick-room.

There are several things which should be kept in mind in preventing the spread of scarlet fever.

(1) If possible, have the sick one in a room by himself. Have all unnecessary things carried from the room before the sick one is carried there. Have good air in the room but avoid direct drafts. Many children lose their lives by getting out too soon after they have had scarlet fever even after the disease in a very mild form.

Another reason why the child should not get out too soon is that the scarlet fever child is infectious a long time. Many children after scarlet fever are dangerous to others for 30 days or longer.

(2) There is a special danger from everything which comes from the mouth or nose of the patient, or from discharges from the eyes or ears or from abscesses. All such matter should be received on pieces of cloth or soft paper and burned promptly.

(3) When the nurse must leave the sick-room she must be very careful not to carry infection. There is danger of carrying the infection in her clothing and on her hands. She must be very careful to wash and disinfect her hands when she leaves the room.

(4) Anything carried out of the room and packed away, clothing, toys, or anything else—may remain infected a long time. Everything must be disinfected before it goes from the room.

(5) Milk and some other foods are very easily infected if they are handled by persons who have scarlet fever or who have been near that disease.

(6) If the head of the family can and will keep strictly away from the sick-room and from all infectious persons and things, the board of health will try to give him as much liberty as possible in attending to his usual work.

(7) No child must return to school from the infected house until he receives a permit from the board of health.

Disinfection.

Promptly burn all worthless articles is the best way. Boiling for half an hour is sure for clothing or other things which can be boiled. Scalding with boiling water for spoons, forks, cups and other eating utensils will make them safe. Steaming in a tin wash-boiler for an hour after the water is actually boiling will do for clothing. The clothing must be supported above the water on a false bottom of board or lath and that on two bricks set on edge. Disinfect the hands with thorough washing with soap and water. Ask the local board of health for further information.

Work with the board of health for that which will be for the greatest good of all—the prevention of the spread of scarlet fever. Be honest, be square, and the board will help and favor you all it can.

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